



JULIE LASSA

STATE SENATOR

Public Hearing on Senate Bill 619
Senate Committee on Transportation
Thursday, April 1, 2010
Room 330SW
10:01am.

Chairman Holperin and members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

Thank you for holding a hearing today on Senate Bill 619 which would increase the annual donation for the Celebrate Children license plate.

Wisconsin offers several specialty license plate designs to our motorists including the Celebrate Children license plate, which shows support for the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

Those who choose to have a Celebrate Children plate currently make a \$20 donation to the Celebrate Children Foundation along with their annual registration fee. Senate Bill 619 increases the voluntary donation amount by \$5 making the total annual contribution \$25.

Most specialty plates have a donation of \$25 to their patron cause. This bill brings the donation amount for the Celebrate Children Foundation in line with contributions made through other specialty license plates.

The Celebrate Children Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization that helps communities throughout Wisconsin create the most effective early learning systems for children from birth to age five. Through public-private partnerships, the Foundation's initiatives reach children at a critical time in their development and help to promote the growth of healthy, engaged citizens. The Foundation created a permanent endowment to ensure that investments will continue to be made on behalf of young children throughout this state well into the future. Funds from the endowment currently support initiatives that create safe and positive learning environments for children, provide training opportunities for early childhood professionals, and structures for the physical, mental, and emotional support for children and their families. The \$5 increase to the Celebrate Children license plate will help the Foundation reach additional children all across our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation. Please feel free to contact me directly should you have any questions.

April 1, 2010

To: Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry, and Natural Resources

From: Celebrate Children Foundation
Jim Leonhart, Executive Vice President
james.leonhart@celebrate-children.org
608-266-6953

Re: Senate Bill 619

The Celebrate Children Foundation was created by statute in 1998 to build an endowment from the \$20 tax-deductible donation attached to the CELEBRATE CHILDREN license plate. The interest generated from the endowment was to be invested in effective early care and learning programs for children from birth to age five.

Current brain research is unmistakably clear about the need to have children in quality early care and learning environments to maximize their potential to become productive students and citizens.

The Celebrate Children Foundation endowment has reached approximately \$1M after a decade of donations from license plate sales. In order to have a more immediate impact on an education system that needs support, the endowment would need to be substantially larger.

A number of marketing efforts have been implemented in the past year to try to stimulate increased sales and grow the current base of 5,250 plates.

Six of the eight special plates in Wisconsin currently collect \$25 for each plate sold.

SB 619 would increase the tax-deductible donation for CELEBRATE CHILDREN plates from \$20 to \$25, which would accelerate the growth of the endowment to help meet the objective of the Celebrate Children Foundation Board of Directors to create a \$5M endowment and, in turn, make purposeful grants to early care and learning initiatives in Wisconsin.

SB 619 is about investing in our children. Your support is appreciated.

Children's Trust Fund

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION BOARD

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Representative Donna Seidel
85th Assembly District

Dimitri Topitzes, PhD
Assistant Professor, UW Milwaukee School
of Social Work

April 1, 2010

**TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Forestry,
and Natural Resources**

FROM: Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board

RE: Support for Senate Bill 619

The Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board supports Senate Bill 619, which will increase the donation on the Celebrate Children special license plate from \$20.00 to \$25.00. All of the donations raised through the special plates support a permanent endowment at the Celebrate Children Foundation. Currently, six out of the eight special plates in Wisconsin collect annual \$25.00 donations. This legislation would bring the Celebrate Children license plate donation in line with the other special plates.

The Celebrate Children Foundation was established in 1998. The funds raised through the Celebrate Children license plates will help ensure that sustainable investments are made to support high quality early learning experiences for children birth to age five throughout the state.

According to data from the Children's Defense Fund, in 2008, 72 percent of children under age five in Wisconsin had both parents in the labor force; the third highest percentage of all states nationwide. Research shows that children, especially low-income and disadvantaged children who participate in high quality early care and education show more positive outcomes later in life.

According to the latest research on brain development, humans learn in a linear fashion. Thus, if children do not have a basic foundation of knowledge from which to draw at the start, it is more difficult and may be nearly impossible to learn the necessary skills later in life. Brain research has indicated that 90 percent of a human brain is developed in the first three years of life. Unfortunately, however, more financial resources are allocated to ages 6-18; years after a significant portion of the brain has been developed.

In addition, early childhood interventions, have been directly linked to the prevention of child abuse and neglect. Arthur Reynolds from the University of Minnesota through the Chicago Longitudinal Study has shown that children who participated in the Chicago Child-Parent Centers had reduced incidents of child abuse and neglect. In addition, the Nurse Family Partnership, an intensive home visiting program for first-time mothers also reports lower rates of substantiated child maltreatment for participants.

By increasing the donation to the Celebrate Children special plate, the Foundation can invest and leverage additional resources to support high quality early childhood learning experiences for all children in Wisconsin.